FARMING FOR THE FUTURE IN NEW YORK

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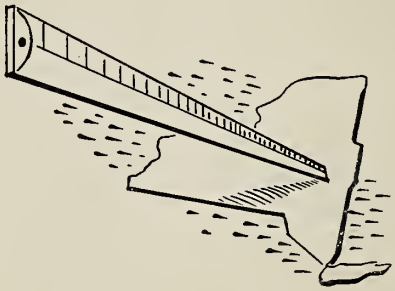
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Production and Marketing Administration

NEARLY all New York State soils are low in phosphorus, most of them are low in calcium, and there is increasing evidence of deficiency in potash. Three-fourths of the cropland and plowable pasture land is suffering from serious to moderate erosion.

The few examples presented here of farmer accomplishments under the Agricultural Conservation Program show how some New York farmers are using the available facilities and materials to build and maintain their soils. The research and educational work of the State College of Agriculture, the Agricultural Experiment Stations, and the Agricultural Extension Service and the technical work of the Soil Conservation Service are drawn upon in developing the State's ACP activities.

The purpose of this brief report is to show what farmers can accomplish under the Federal program when they really set out to build and maintain their soils.

A YARDSTICK OF ACCOMPLISHMENT



More efficient farm production, improved quality of farm products, better health in the cities—these are the hard-to-measure results of the Nation's farm program. A tangible yardstick of accomplishment is available in the increased use of agricultural limestone and superphosphate. Here are the figures for New York State:

	1936	1945
Farms in program	35,466	71,259
Agricultural limestone (tons)	233,374	866,085
20-percent superphosphate (tons)	46,187	124,147

ABOUT 1 POUND OF SUPER PER COW PER DAY

Up in the north country, where the snow gets deep, Robert M. Thompson, Master Farmer, Heuvelton, improves the soil on his St. Lawrence County farm by using superphosphate mixed with the manure in the dairy barn. He contends that this mixture of 1 pound of "super" per cow per day provides just the right top dressing for his hay land, and it works especially well on new seedings.

Here, grazing on a permanent pasture, is a 3-year-old heifer from the Thompson herd, with a production record for her first year of milking of 15,000 pounds of milk. The pasture is treated regularly with superphosphate. The wild white clover shows clearly in the foreground.

Twenty acres of Ladino clover provide high protein hay and supplement the permanent pasture in late summer and fall.

Good pasture for a good cow—note the white clover

A few trials with potash also have given good results, and Mr. Thompson plans to include this material in his future soil-building, pasture-improving efforts.

Mixing superphosphate in the dairy barn

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STARTED WITH 2 POUNDS OF LADINO CLOVER

Stanley Benham, Dutchess County dairy farmer and ACP county committeeman, is shown on the cover with his son. Below is Mr. Benham in a Ladino clover pasture 5 years after seeding. This picture was taken July 11, 1945, after the pasture had been grazed in rotation with other fields since April 5.

This is Mr. Benham's story of how he is improving and maintaining his land:

"About 5 years ago I bought 2 pounds of Ladino clover seed. Since then, encouraged by the results of this trial, I've used about 70 pounds more. I've found, that with manure, lime, a generous amount of superphosphate, and sometimes a little potash, I can grow Ladino even on the poorest pasture land.

"Being able to keep my land in good sod for longer periods and with less need for silage, I do not plow those hillsides as often as I used to, and when I do, I plow strips on the contour. As a result, the little brook down below runs much clearer than it used to.

"Income? Well, better yielding hay and pasture mean more cows. Better quality hay and pasture mean more milk per cow and more milk per pound of grain. Altogether, they mean a better income and a better living for farm people. And, as minerals are restored to the soil, they mean health and vitality for the people in the city."

It looked like this at the start

In Ladino clover 5 years after planting

KEY TO LOWER COST MILK PRODUCTION

Long contour strips were laid out

Wesley Butts took over the family homestead in northern Steuben County back in 1920. For 15 years he farmed the old way—up and down hill. Pastures were poor; crop yields low. The topsoil kept getting a little thinner as unchecked water carried away the good earth.

About 10 years ago, the "face lifting" program on the Butt's farm got under way. Fences and hedgerows were removed, long contour strips laid out, steep hillsides were put in pasture, the less productive land reforested. Legume hay and pastures were improved through the use of superphosphate and lime. The ACP was a big help.

As a result the 24-percent-protein grain ration has been cut to 16 percent and he uses less of it. More pounds of milk per pound of grain—and the "good earth" stays where it belongs. Alfalfa and clover make the difference.

The wild white clover pasture shown in the inset is an important cog in the improvement program. No seed was planted. The clover "came in" as the minerals were restored to the land. Barn feeding used to start about August 1, when the hot summer weather dried up the grass. Now the herd has plenty of pasture all summer. Two cross fences divide the pasture into three fields, thus making it possible to rotate the grazing. With better pasture, good for a longer time, there is less land in pasture than before.

An important cog in the improvement

CHECKING EROSION, IMPROVING DRAINAGE, BUILDING SOIL

When Robert Stowell took over his 176-acre Allegany County farm near Belmont in 1937, timothy hay and buckwheat were the principal crops. Clover was not very successful. Eight cows and a few heifers were about all the farm would carry.

The picture across the top of the page tells the story of what has happened to the Stowell farm to bring it to its present state of production. It is a story of checking erosion, improving drainage, and building up the soil; of using all the ACP materials available.

At the extreme lower left are a few of the 15,000 trees planted on a steep slope to stop erosion. In the rectangular field just beyond and to the right of the trees is a new seeding of Ladino and alsike planned to provide pasture after haying. The rich, high-protein hay will be a prime factor in reducing grain costs. Two large, recently installed electric hay driers still further insure hay quality.

Toward the center of the picture is the poultry range of Ladino clover and timothy which, when properly rotated, promotes the health and reduces the feed costs of growing pullets. The laying flock averages better than 200 eggs per hen per year. A close-up of poultry on pasture is shown at the left.

The cows to the right are grazing in a permanent pasture of wild white clover and grasses. It has been developed by careful pasturing and proper treatment with lime, phosphate, and manure.

In the foreground of the picture, sloping from left to right, is a diversion ditch which protects the land below from runoff water and seepage. There is water in the ditch most of the time. To the right and in the background is shown a strip-cropped, cultivated field. A luxuriant growth of clover, protecting a diversion ditch in this field is shown at the right.

In 1945 the Stowell farm had 39 head of registered Holsteins—19 cows and 20 heifers—more than double the number of 10 years ago. The herd now averages about 10,500 pounds of milk per cow per year. Figures showing income over feed costs are particularly impressive. In 1940 the net return was $60 per cow per year, in 1942, $168, and in 1944, $248. Much of the gain was due to reduced production cost.

QUALITY FORAGE AND ROUGHAGE GET RESULTS

For high production—extra quality pasture

A one-cow-per-acre pasture is no longer a rarity but it still takes extra attention to get it. Lowell F. Mayne, of Burlington Flats, Otsego County, has one. He is shown here with his son, clipping the weeds and mature grass. The clipping helps to maintain a succulent growth of clover and grasses. Treatment with superphosphate keeps up the soil.

Here's how Mr. Mayne sums up his convictions: "For top milk production a well-grown cow with inherited ability to produce needs plenty of extra-quality hay and pasture. Grain is of secondary importance. I have made my best cow-testing association records on 16-percent-protein feed. And, such a ration is cheaper and easier to obtain."

HELPS FARMERS BUILD DRAINAGE DITCH

A 3½-mile ditch, draining 14 farms in Wayne County, is an outstanding example of farmer cooperation under the ACP. The picture shows a section of the enterprise known as the Fox drainage ditch as it meanders through a low wet area, reviving production on otherwise good land. The "spoil bank" to the left of the ditch has been leveled and will be used for crops.

Outstanding cooperation—the ditch revives production

FARMING ON THE CONTOUR TO KEEP LAND IN PLACE

Strip cropping and diversion ditches help hold the land

Hills and mountains are no novelty to Peter Waldberger, farmer near Waterville, Oneida County. He is a native of Switzerland, where most of the land is "on edge" and where farmers long ago learned that if they are to keep their land in place, farming must be done on the contour.

With this background, Mr. Waldberger needed no urging to take full advantage of the conservation possibilities of the Federal farm program. His farm is in the rich farming area of central New York, about a mile from the Cherry Valley Turnpike, where the rolling land shows evidence of long-ago glaciers.

The narrow dark strip running through the center of the picture (just about the top of the tree in the center) is the diversion ditch which carries off excess water and serves as the backbone of his contour-farming system.

ACP lime and superphosphate have been applied regularly to crop and pasture land. The fine pasture in the foreground shows the result.

Peter Waldberger knows that farming must be done on the contour

MANY ORCHARD PRACTICES IN PROGRAM

Straw mulch under the trees on a Dutchess County farm

With New York ranging from second to seventh among the States in the production of apples, grapes, sour cherries, pears, and sweet cherries, ACP practices for orchards and vineyards are of prime importance.

Shown here is a practice which many fruit growers use. The view is of the apple orchard on the E. Stewart Hubbard farm in Dutchess County, showing the use of a straw mulch under the trees. Care is taken to keep thick mulch away from the trunks, to prevent rodents from gnawing the bark in winter.

Other orchard practices which find favor under the State's varying conditions include contour planting of new orchards and vineyards, diversion terraces on steep slopes, contour cultivation, and the application of fertilizers.

LAND REPAIRS AT THE HEADWATERS OF THE MOHAWK

"A desert of redtop and timothy" once described many parts of Oneida County. Now, after years of Extension Service teaching, nearly every farmer has developed his "oasis" of clover.

Joseph Sadlowski, who farms at West Branch, up where the Mohawk gets its start, is a good example. For 10 years or more, lime and superphosphate have been going on the Sadlowski land under the ACP program. He is shown here in a field of red and alsike clover. A trial of Ladino is next on his schedule.

An "oasis" of alsike and red clover—but planning some Ladino

NEW YORK STATE COMMITTEE

Robert J. Howard, State PMA Director, Chenango County

Carl N. Emerling, Erie County

L. R. Simons, Director of Extension, Ithaca

The New York State Production and Marketing Committee, made up of five farmers and the Director of the Extension Service, is in charge of the Agricultural Conservation Program in the State and coordinates this and other PMA activities with the work of other agencies—Federal, State, and county.

The five farmer members of the State Committee are practical farmers who operate family-size farms, produce milk, potatoes, and vegetables. The State Committee has the assistance of 171 farmer-elected county committeemen and 1,743 elected community committeemen in the State's 57 agricultural counties.

Maurice L. Mallery, Broome County

Ferris G. Talmage, Suffolk County

David G. Agne, Oneida County

NEW YORK STATE OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the Agricultural Conservation Program of the Production and Marketing Administration in New York State are:

1. To raise the quality and yield of crops and livestock products by improving pasture, hay, and cover crops, by increasing legume acreage, and by adding lime, superphosphate, and other soil-building materials to the soil as needed.

2. To promote better rotations and better cropping practices and to encourage the use of erosion-control practices where needed.

3. To stabilize farm income, insure adequate production, and keep pace with changing national and world needs.

4. To contribute to national health by maintaining the mineral content of the soil and by encouraging the production of nutritionally important food.

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